

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:**

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 3, line 13, with the following amended paragraph:

Thus, it is quite beneficial for the service life of the device (i.e., of the guide structure functioning as microstructure electrodes) for it to be coated with a protective dielectric layer in the vicinity of the plasma regions.

Primarily~~Primarily~~ suited for this are ceramic protective layers. The service life of the microstructure electrodes may be significantly prolonged by this protective layer which cannot be used in a direct voltage operation.